(c) India and Japan have signed a Joint Statement in December, 2006 during the visit of our Prime Minister to Japan for a strategic and global partnership between the two countries, which also envisages stepping up of Indo-Japan economic engagement.

Reduction in import duty on rubber

4454. SHRI ABDUL WAHAB PEEVEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Kerala Government has urged the Central Government to stop the move for reduction in import duty on rubber from Thailand;

(b) if so, the details of the request received; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Kerala Government has raised concerns regarding reduction of import duty on natural rubber and its effect on the economy of Kerala. The natural rubber carries an import duty and there has been no change in the duty structure. Government of India has also kept all the traded forms of natural rubber (NR) in the negative list of various Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and its import is closely monitored by the Government.

Objections to import of Indian mangoes by Japan and USA

4455. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Japan is not importing our mangoes, citing that our mangoes are not vapour heated;

(b) whether it is also a fact that USA has also refused to import our mangoes, citing that they are not free from bacteria;

(c) if so, whether Government have decided to set up two vapour heat plants in Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?